One of Bay Area's greatest assets is its abundance of woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats. Many wildlife species are in close proximity to their human neighbors as housing development expands in our region. We invite you to take a few minutes to read about some of the common wildlife species found in the county and several things you can do to get along with these original "residents" of your neighborhood.

How to Be Wildlife-Friendly

There are a few important steps to take to keep a healthy distance between your family and wildlife in the neighborhood. Following these tips helps make wild animals welcome guests rather than pests.

- Keep garbage in tightly-covered containers and pick up fallen fruit from fruit trees. Without the smells associated with foodstuffs from our houses and gardens, animals are much less likely to create nuisances in our yards.
- Do not leave pet food or water out in your yard. Close pet doors at night to keep wild animals out.
- Keeping cats indoors will protect them from disease and predators, as well as help conserve native songbirds, lizards, salamanders, and other small animals. Free-roaming cats have devastating effects on native animals.
- Close or screen entrances to attics, vents, and crawl spaces, and areas under sheds or decks, so animals cannot use those areas to sleep or breed.
- If deer are a problem in your area, plant "deer resistant" plants recommended by your local nursery.
- If raccoons or skunks are digging in your lawn, you may have a grub (insect larvae that eat grass roots) problem. Watering the lawn in the morning rather than the evening will make the lawn more difficult to dig and keep the grubs deeper in the soil during the evening hours. Heavy grub infestations should be treated with the minimum amount of toxic substances. Ask your local nursery about beneficial nematodes for grub control.
- Let native wildlife stay wild. Although well-intentioned, feeding wildlife disrupts natural behaviors and can reduce long-term survival.
- Do not handle wildlife. This can harm animals and expose you to disease.